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Miss Wisteria at Home

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MISS WISTARIA AT HOME

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Miss Wistaria at Home

A Tale of Modern Japan

BY

MARGARET LANCASTER STRING

BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS
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INTRODUCTION

MISS WISTARIA AT HOME

In this little book the author has made no attempt to give the history or geography of Japan; her effort was to write a simple little story of the Japan our missionaries know. She has written a book for Juniors to read, and has tried to weave in it the work the Reformed Church in the United States is doing in Japan. The story is true, as far as the incidents in the story are concerned, but the names are not real, and of course all these incidents did not happen in the life of any one person. It will be interesting to read, knowing that everything has really happened, not to Miss Wistaria, but to some one known to our missionaries.

The author is indebted to many books in the Public Library of Cleveland for sources of information, and is especially indebted to Mrs. W. E. Hoy, Mrs. D. B. Schneder and Rev. Christopher Noss, D.D., for stories and incidents, and to Mr. John H. Poorman, Secretary of the Mission Study Department, for pictures and helps.

WOULD YOU?

Would you like to be a Japanese,
And wear a kimono?
And wear a gay red obi sash,
All bunched up in a bow?
Would you like a paper parasol,
An oily one, you know,
And scrape along on wooden clogs,
Wherever you should go?

Would you like to be a Japanese
And sit upon the floor,
And have your food on little trays,
When father's meal is o'er?
And would you to the temples go,
With fierce gods at the door,
And humbly make your offering,
Though your heart with fear was sore?

Oh, no! American! I think
You'd rather be, by far,
A happy, care-free, helpful child,
The very kind you are!
Then thank God for the blessings
That He has given thee,
And send the knowledge of His love
To the children across the sea.

—Mrs. Maude W. Madden.

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MISS WISTARIA AT HOME

CHAPTER I

MISS WISTARIA, A MAID OF MODERN JAPAN

Good morning, Junior boys and girls, I have been asked to tell you all about my life in far-away Japan. I wonder just what you want to know about me. The first thing I can remember is my home. It was a one-story wooden house, much like all the other houses on our street, covered with a shingled roof. The partitions, dividing room from room, were of paper and could easily be removed. In our outer walls were sliding panels which were left open most of the time.

In this way we had plenty of fresh air and sunshine, but very little privacy. We had great shutters which could be used when needed.

They were used mostly at night, and I believe I remem-

ber more about the nights, than the days, in my early life. It was always my delight when O Ka San (mother) placed me on my warm thick roll on the floor. This roll, you know, was my bed, which had been taken from the closet in the wall and spread out for me to sleep on, to have my dear old O Ba San (grandmother) tell me stories until I fell asleep. The stories I enjoyed most were about my own dear country and its beautiful flag. Japan is called the "Sunrise Country," and our flag is a great red sun on a white field.

THE JAPANESE FLAG AND THE STARS AND STRIPES

O Ba San told me Japan received this name because the Sun God would drop to sleep every night in the waters round about our Islands, and upon awakening the next morning would shed his light on our country first of all. I liked

to hear her tell me the story about how Japan came into existence.

In the early days of Izanagi and Izanami, the first man and woman of Japan, the gods told them to consolidate and produce the earth, at the same time handing them a jewelled spear.

Standing on the bridge of heaven, they stirred and stirred the mass, that was intended for the earth, until it came together and was thoroughly mixed, then drawing their spear from this briny mixture, they found some drops dropping from this wonderful spear. These drops hardened and thus all the islands of Japan were formed.

O Ba San also told me our Mikado (Emperor) was a descendant from the Sun Goddess, and he was a great warrior, conquering all who opposed him. As a reward he was made Emperor of Japan.

I know now these tales were only legends and that very likely our name "Japan" came from China, from their word "Jip-pun," which means the place the Sun comes from.

Our four thousand islands were made possibly by some volcanic eruptions, the same as any other islands.

Most of the islands are small, resting green and beautiful upon the blue waters of the Pacific Ocean, about six

thousand miles west of the United States. We are your nearest neighbors to the west. Japan, a string of islands, is like a great dragon in shape. Think of the island of Yezo as its head and its tail reaching as far south as Formosa. The dragon seems to be sunning itself along the entire eastern coast of Asia.

The four great islands which compose the mainland, Yezo, Nippon, Shikoku and Kyushu, taken together, would about equal California in area.

Nippon is separated from Shikoku and Kyushu by the lovely Inland Sea. Here are bays, inlets, waterfalls and lakes with water clear as crystal, reflecting in their depths the great mountain peaks. This Inland Sea earns for my country the name of "Japan the Beautiful."

The country is mountainous and has many volcanoes, some of which are still active. We have many fine harbors, and fishing is a great industry. Most of our people are farmers, raising rice, wheat, tea and tobacco. Potatoes are raised in large quantities, while other vegetables and fruits abound. I love my beautiful country and you would love it, too, if you could visit with me our sacred mountain Fujiyama.

The mountain seems to rise out of the waters of the

FUJIYAMA, THE SACRED MOUNTAIN

Pacific Ocean for more than twelve thousand feet. It is a sacred place to all Japanese, and every summer thousands of pilgrims wend their weary way to its summit for healing of body and mind.

A little legend tells us the gods caused this great mountain to appear over night and have made it their home ever since.

In the olden times when we failed to understand a thing, we just explained it by saying the gods planned it, so no doubt this is why this story about Fuji gained credence. The mountain top is always snow-crowned, and because of its great height it can be seen from thirteen provinces.

The next time you look at a Japanese fan, tray, screen or painting, look for this sacred Fuji. We never tire of painting it. At sunset the mountains seem to be ever changing from rose and violet to the deep purple of evening.

The glorious sunrise changes them again from a purple haze to the lilac and pink of morning splendor.

We very often have earthquakes and I don't like them at all. When I was quite a little girl we had an earthquake that shook our frail house, knocking the lamps from the shelves and setting the house on fire.

Our neighbors came and soon tore the house down. We

had no fire engine in our city then. No one was hurt and our friends kindly sheltered us in their homes until our house was rebuilt, and ever since then I am afraid of earthquakes.

Our home is in the city of Sendai, just a few miles from the coast in Miyagi province in Northeastern Japan.

Shiogama, the seaport, is really the gateway to Sendai. Nearby is the beautiful Bay of Matsushima, quite as beautiful, although not so well known as the Inland Sea of the South. Travelers rarely come as far North as Sendai. Matsushima means Pine Islands, and takes its name from the hundreds of curious islands which the sea has carved from the soft yellow rock. Each island is covered with pine trees.

The Hirose River leaves its mountain bed at Sendai and half encircles the city as it begins its course through the fertile plain of the Miyagi province, never stopping until it reaches the ocean beyond.

From the high bluffs on the west of Sendai you will get but a mere glimpse of the low houses and narrow streets, for the city is full of trees. Our city is the home of one hundred thousand people.

BAY OF MATSUSHIMA

CHAPTER II

NAMING BABY

If I am to tell you my story I really should begin with my birth, and tell you all my O Ka San (mother) used to tell me about the things that happened while I was too young to understand them.

Our family name was "Yoshida." Now, all Japanese names mean something, and our name meant "good field." One day in February neighbors came wading through the snow on their "geta" (wooden shoes), passing through our little gateway and along the row of stepping-stones to our tiny porch. Instead of knocking or pushing the button of an electric bell, each visitor called, "Excuse me, please!"

At that the sliding door opened, disclosing my O Ba San (grandmother) seated on the floor and bowing until her head touched the mat. Greetings were exchanged and the question asked which meant, "Is it a boy or a girl?" Of course they referred to me, the very new baby. With an air of apology grandmother answered, "A girl." All the joy in our neighbors' faces was changed to sadness and they tried

WADING THROUGH THE SNOW

to comfort my family by saying, "Perhaps the gods will be more gracious to you the next time and send you a boy." Some of the visitors would then slip off their shoes, for you know the shoes in Japan are always left outdoors; straw sandals or a simple "tabi" (stocking) made of cotton cloth and very much resembling our mittens are worn in the house. And then they would enter our little parlor.

This room is bare of all furniture except the grass mats, a few cushions, and a picture roll hanging in a recessed place of honor. Our visitors, as is our custom, would sit on one of the mats while we draw a little table before them and serve them with tea and rice cakes. While they drink the tea, making just as much noise with their mouths as possible (this is to show how good they consider the tea), they would continue to express their regrets because the baby was a girl rather than a boy.

However, O Totsu San (father) and O Ka San (mother) did not feel half as badly as they imagined. They took a real interest in me. Of course they would have believed it very bad luck if I had been the first baby, but I was number two, and Taro San (eldest son) had brought them great happiness and the favor of the gods only two years before.

Mother was in a room just next to our garden; the drooping wistaria vines almost seemed to be growing in the room itself. It was a pretty room, with its bed on the floor, and the tea kettle singing over a little charcoal fire box. The only furniture was a great chest of drawers built into the room. This chest, with its red-lacquered front, added a touch of color and made the little baby dressed in a brilliant yellow and scarlet kimono look very gay indeed.

On the top of this chest stood the ancestral tablets. They were wooden tablets inscribed with the name of a dead relative. With them stood a row of ugly images, you would say, but they were our gods. This was our "Kamidana" (god-shelf) and to these gods we looked for protection and help. We expected them to keep away sickness, death, fire and any other calamity that might touch our dwelling.

O Totsu San planted a little tree called "kiri" for me the day I was born. Many of our people do this, with the idea that the tree will grow large enough to furnish the wood for the bureau when their daughter is married. I think this would depend on how early or late in life she became a bride, don't you? When I was seven days old I received my name. The name Fuji, meaning wistaria, was selected,

possibly because it is a Japanese custom to name girls after flowers, and mother no doubt thought of the graceful, beautiful vine in our garden, with a wish that her daughter should grow up equally graceful and beautiful.

The name was written on a slip of paper and with great ceremony presented to the row of gods and ancestral tablets on the god-shelf, thus announcing to the departed spirits the arrival of a new member of the family. On another slip of paper was written this notice: "To Mr. Yoshida was born a daughter, Fuji." This notice was posted in our parlor, where anyone who happened to come in might see it.

Of course my family would call me Fuji, or perhaps Nei San (sister), but everyone else must call me O Fuji San (honorable Miss Fuji), as San after a name means either Mister, Mrs. or Miss. During the next fourteen days I did nothing but eat and sleep and take my bath like all babies. Did I say take my bath like all babies? Well! I hardly meant that, for babies in Japan have a hard time getting used to a bath. What would you do if your grandmother would bring in a great wash tub about half-full of almost boiling water, and rolling you in a white cloth, drop you in this fearfully hot water to soak? Well! I just screamed as loudly as I could, and I guess you would have done the same.

After I was lifted out grandmother rubbed me with a dry cloth and a little oil and fastened a gay kimono around me.

My little kimonos were all so gay. The ground of scarlet, purple or yellow would be covered with large poppies, chrysanthemums, plum or cherry blossoms, or a wistaria bloom. Doubtless they were the gifts of our friends, for at the birth of a child the callers either bring a kimono for the baby to wear or a fish for the mother to eat.

The subject of clothes in Japan is a very simple one, as the whole family dresses alike and the styles never change.

The difference between boys' and girls' clothing is largely one of color. Men and boys wear kimonos of dull colors and a narrow belt, while women and girls wear gay and very bright-colored kimonos, with wide "obi" (sash) tied in back. Many of these sashes are five yards long and very heavy to wear.

My twenty-first day was a feast day. Mother was considered well again and able to return to the family duties, so our friends and relatives celebrated by eating a big dinner at our house. The main course was rice cooked with red beans. After the meal small portions of this rice in

red-lacquered boxes were sent to all the friends who had sent me a gift.

My next great day was the thirty-third day. I was dressed in my gayest kimono, a purple ground with large scarlet peonies on it, tied to the back of a little nurse girl, another kimono was wound around me, and mother, grandmother, nurse and I wended our way to the Temple.

Mother carried a bag of rice and as we crossed over the little bridge leading to the temple, mother threw rice into the stream, hoping thus to secure the good-will of the gods.

Arriving at the temple, the women slipped off their shoes and climbed the steps to the temple door. Here they clapped their hands and rang a great bell to awaken the gods who might be sleeping. Grandmother presented me with due ceremony to the gods, after dropping her money in the contribution box, announcing loudly that the temple had now gained another worshipper. Before leaving, both mother and grandmother bowed down to the ground and begged the gods to be good to me and guard me from all evil spirits. They arose assured of an answer to their prayers.

They did want me to have everything that made for

NURSES CARRYING BABIES

happiness, and they knew no other god who would listen to their prayers. .

The days passed rapidly and I was one hundred days old and received my first meal. At least that is what mother called it, but somehow after I heard all about it I began to think O Ba San and not the baby received the first meal.

A feast of rice and red beans was again prepared and the oldest member of our family, grandmother, took me on her lap, and taking a little ball of rice in her chop-sticks, placed it in my mouth for a second, after which she would withdraw it and proceed to eat it herself. This is known as baby's first meal. After my "first meal," much of my time was spent on the back of a nurse-maid, a mere child herself. Mothers and children carry babies strapped on their backs almost all day long.

Anywhere women can be seen with babies on their backs, swaying to and fro to soothe the babies, while chatting with neighbors, shopping, etc. Little girls carry babies to school or romp and play, while babies either laugh, cry or sleep on their backs.

Our babies are the best babies in the world, or they never would be so good-natured under such treatment.

TWO WAYS OF TRAVEL

It is said that Japanese babies never cry, but I guess we do our share. But, really, we have less to cry about than other babies. We have no furniture in our houses to keep away from; we are never housed up in dark rooms, and we can even play in the street without danger from automobiles. So, why should we cry?

During my first six years I learned to play with dolls and to carry them on my back as mother carried me. I learned to sit properly on the floor with my feet crossed under me; I learned how to greet my father and any friends with a polite bow, putting my hands together in a heart shape on the floor and bowing until my head almost touched my hands. I also learned to bow much lower to men

than to women. I learned to obey my grandparents, father and Ani San (elder brother), and to place a daily offering on the god-shelf. This offering was often a portion of my food.

Every day I was taught to worship my ancestors, and during these early years one more tablet was placed on the shelf, for O Ji San (grandfather) died. So a new name was inscribed for him and I had a new tablet to remember and worship.

CHAPTER III

AT PLAY

The children of Japan just love to play. They have so many games just like the games you play, only we call them by other names.

All our boys enjoy playing with tops and balls; oh, how they can spin tops. It seems very easy for them to keep three spinning at the same time. Then the balls, too; they rarely use just one—they endeavor to have several in the air at a time. The girls play a game called "Bounce the Ball." The ball is dashed upon the ground so it will bounce, while the girl must turn clear around and be ready to strike the ball again on the rebound. She should do this at least five times without missing. Try it some time; it is lots of fun for the girl, but hard on the baby strapped on her back.

"Battledore and Shuttlecock" is another game all the girls play. A new battledore is always expected as a New Year's gift, much as your children expect a new doll at Christmas. We are all very fond of candy. While at play we eat candy that is made from chestnuts and barley sugar.

It is made in large slabs about one inch thick, much like your taffy. We not only buy it along the street, but we can buy cakes and even make them on our streets.

Did you ever see a cooking-stove man on your streets? One day while I was playing I heard the bell and I knew it was the cooking-stove man.

He carries a real kitchen with him; the stove is a little charcoal burner and oven, and besides he has all the utensils used in cooking or baking a cake. All the children follow him. Making, baking and eating your cake is such fun that even boys purchase from him.

We give him a coin and he gives us some dough according to the size of the coin. We shape it; the boys almost always make a fish, while the girls try to make flowers, and putting it in the tiny oven bake it brown. I remember one day I had a coin and gave it to him, but I told him I wanted to make my own cake, so he gave me a cup, spoon and tiny bowl and all the things for a cake. Oh! how I did mix and stir, and finally rolled it out on the little board, carefully shaping a plum blossom. I then slipped it into the oven and waited so anxiously for it to bake. It was my first lesson in baking.

The day before our New Year's festival these men come

around and help our families to prepare little cakes of rice to use on these holidays.

These men are really called "O Mochi" men. They boil the water, steam and pound the rice, keeping their mallets going to the rhythm of the song they sing.

Mothers and grandmothers then take the pounded rice and shape it into little cakes to bake. When I was little I just loved to help shape these tiny cakes. Some of them we used on the "Kamidana" (god-shelf), placing them in a little pyramid on the "Toko" (place of honor).

The day before New Year's is a busy day. While the girls and women are busy in the kitchen, at the front of the house Ani San (elder brother) and O Totsu San (father) are planting a tree. Every family erects two little trees. They are either pine or bamboo. The poorer people set up at least a twig. We erected a pine tree because our father told us our ancestors always carried a pine tree with them into battle, and it helped them to win, so of course we like the pine tree best. Our trees were placed one on each side of the doorway, with a straw rope connecting the two, making it look like an arch. On this arch was placed a fern, with lots of leaves and a red lobster. I'm sure you want to know what all this means, don't you? Our pine tree stands

for courage and ability to endure, the red lobster means long life. Hanging over the door it says: "May the folks in here live till their backs are bent double and their beards reach to their knees, like the feelers on this lobster."

The fern, with its many leaves, means many children. Over all this decoration we place the two flags of the Rising Sun. But I almost hear you say, "What about that straw rope?" A little legend tells us that one time the winter had been so long the people thought the Sun Goddess had fallen asleep in her cave, so they went to the cave and made loud noises beating drums. Finally the Goddess came out to see what all the racket meant, and the men slyly stepped behind her and stretched a straw rope across the mouth of the cave, so she could not go in again. So some people say we put up that straw rope to help us remember the Sun Goddess and all she does for us, but I believe the real reason is because a rope is used in our Shinto shrines to mark off the clean interior from the common outer world, and we use it to show that we want nothing unclean nor unlucky to come in our house all this New Year. I think if you would put our decorations into words it would say: "May every one in this house be strong and well; may the family live to a good old age and have lots of sons; may nothing unclean or unlucky enter

this door!" Splendid wishes for a New Year, don't you think?

When the great holiday arrives we get up very early in the morning. O Totsu San goes to the temple before breakfast. After breakfast we visit all our relatives and friends. It is a day of great rejoicing. The streets are gay with the kites of the boys and the battledores of the girls. Many of these battledores are beautifully embroidered.

Every boy has a kite, as he carries his own gifts to others, and the girls carry their battledores just as proudly. At each house we visit we receive tea and the little mochi cakes. We eat all we can, but best of all, when we can eat no more, it is quite polite to slip the rest in our great sleeves for use later on.

This is our first great festival, but I like the second one, the "Feast of Dolls," which comes on the third day of the third month, the very best of all. That's because I am a girl, for Ani San (elder brother) likes the "Feast of Flags," which comes the fifth day of the fifth month, the best. The day before the Doll Festival my dolls were all arranged on shelves, row upon row, such a lot of them. Some had belonged to mother, grandmother, great grandmother and even great-great grandmother.

DOLL FESTIVAL

Each year some new dolls are added. I did not have a complete set, which included the Emperor, Empress and all the court ladies and men, with a band of musicians, and these dolls cost lots of money and could never be played with. On this day we dress in our gayest kimono and, after placing little cakes before our dolls, we go forth to visit the doll displays of our friends, much as you would look at each other's Christmas trees. At each place we bow, eat cakes and drink tea. Our schools are closed and the whole day

given to the girls and their dolls. It is interesting to hear the stories of the various dolls, and I never liked night to come, for then our dolls are placed in boxes and put away for another year.

In April we have the Fete of the Sakura (cherry blossoms). It is our first picnic. We dress and oil our hair, putting in new hair pins and ornaments. We don our gay kimonos and gayer obi (sashes) and under the shelter of an oiled-paper parasol, accompanied by teachers and parents, we walk to our parks. Passing the temple we drop a coin in the contribution box, clap our hands and bow low before the idol, repeating his name over and over, which is supposed to be praying. Then we spend a long, happy day under the cherry trees. Booths are put up in which are sold candy, toys and cherry blossoms; the bands play and the flags wave, while we sit on the ground and eat a lunch of rice cakes or bean paste made in the shape of flowers.

The "Feast of Flags," the boys' festival, is ushered in by each house placing a tall pole near the front door, from the top of which hang fish made of paper or silk. There are always as many fish as there are boys in the family. Most of the fish are carp. This fish is said to be able to swim

against the current and even jump up waterfalls, and was selected as a fitting emblem. This mounted carp is saying to every boy: "You, too, must overcome many obstacles if you would rise to fame."

BOYS' FESTIVAL

The carp, called "nobori," are often four feet long, and a hoop of bamboo holds their mouths open, so they float in the air as though alive.

It is a wonderful sight to see the sky literally filled with fish. Again the shelves are placed up for a display, but instead of dolls, the shelves are filled with toys for boys—soldiers, pictures of the Emperor, figures of "Hachiman" (god of war), archery sets, swords and tiny sets of armor with a pine tree on them. A great day for the boys; filled with visiting, eating, target practice and kite flying.

Athletic contests are indulged in, concluding with a war-

like contest called "Gem-pei." This is a sham battle staged on two nearby hills; one crowd planting a red flag on their hill, while the other crowd plants a white flag on the opposite hill. The flag of the enemy must be captured and carried away. It is played according to rules. It is a battle royal; the boys are often bound hand and foot while proud fathers watch and urge on the contest. The flag captured, the winning side parades the streets of the village and is feasted at the homes of the various boys.

What boy would not enjoy a holiday such as this?

Another old festival we used to celebrate is "Tanabata." Many neglect to celebrate this day and it is not considered so important as other holidays. It occurs on the seventh day of the seventh month. The little legend which suggests this celebration deals with the stars and the wonderful "Milky Way," which we call the "Celestial River." We are told the fable of the Weaver and the Herdsman. The Herdsman is a star in Aquila and the Weaver is the star Vega. They are on opposite sides of the "Milky Way," but on July 7 they come together. The story, as we hear it, is as follows: Once upon a time there was a maiden who would weave all the clothes for the gods. She was kept so busy weaving that she had no time to adorn her own person, hence was not beau-

tiful and no one sought her in marriage. The gods, noting her condition, had compassion on her loneliness. They put it into the heart of a herdsman to marry her. The maiden loved her husband so much she began to neglect her weaving, so the gods separated them, placing them on opposite sides of this "Celestial River," allowing them only one day a year to spend together. This day they are so happy, the gods grant them any favors they may ask.

So it has become the custom to have the children ask favors of the gods on this day through the Weaver and Herdsman.

A small bamboo tree is set up at each door, trimmed with gay lanterns and long strips of many-colored papers, each bearing requests for help from the gods. Boys ask that they may be helped in school or be strong and win in "Gempei," and the girls want to learn to sew and write well and paint. It is a beautiful sight to see all these lanterns and gay papers swaying in the breeze. The boys use this time as another test of strength. They organize clubs and feast all morning, then in the afternoon, each girded with a branch of bamboo, they go forth to fight other clubs. The fun lasts until dark, when the whole family, with lighted lanterns, walk the streets looking at the oddly decorated trees. The

following morning the trees and their trimmings are taken to the nearest bridge and thrown into the running water with a prayer that, as the trees pass from sight, our requests may be borne up to the gods, who are so willing to answer prayers on this particular day.

The last great holiday is the celebration of the Emperor's Birthday. This is on October 31st, the time of maples and chrysanthemums. Flags and soldiers seem to be everywhere. In our capital city, Tokyo, the Emperor reviews his troops; in our city of Sendai we celebrate in our schools. We sing the national anthem and listen to all the stories about our Mikado, and all the great things he has done. A personal message or rescript from the Emperor is read, and we are reminded that it is the duty of every boy and girl in Japan to loyally serve their Emperor, even giving up life itself when necessary.

The exercises completed, the rest of the day is a great picnic. Many spend it in visiting the chrysanthemum shows arranged at that time.

Before the end of November, on the twenty-third of the month, we have a holy day. It is like your Thanksgiving. On that day our Emperor takes the rice just harvested, and tasting it, gives thanks to the gods for a good crop, and then

he gives it to his people for their food. We do not need to work nor go to school on this day, but we are urged to go to our temples and, taking an offering, to give thanks. My offering was always rice cakes and coins, and I, too, offered a prayer of thanks for food in plenty.

CHAPTER IV

SCHOOL DAYS

My days were not all play days and holidays. Many of them were school days and work days. When I was six years old I went to school just as you do in America.

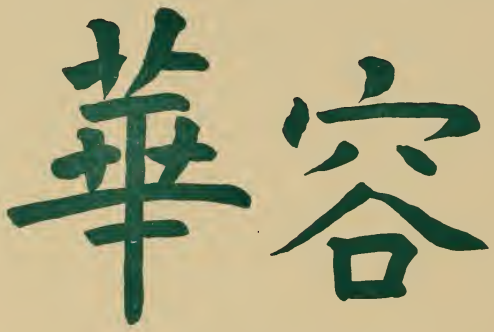
It was hard for me to go to school at first. I thought everyone would laugh at me, and slowly, oh so slowly, I went, carrying my writing materials, a copy-book, a cake of ink and a pen. My pen was not a steel one like your pens. It was just a very tiny paint-brush and is much harder to use than your style of pen.

Our schoolroom had white matting on the floor. We left our shoes on the outside of the room, close beside the door, and such a scramble for shoes when school was over. The only furniture seemed to be odd chests of drawers in which our books, pens, ink and soroban were kept. The soroban is our counting machine. It looks like your counting boards often found in nurseries and kindergartens.

We not only *learn* to count on them, but we become *slaves* to them, and cannot count without them.

You will find these counting machines in all our business houses; in fact, we just can't count without them, and we do use them very rapidly. Arriving at school I made the many bows required, and bowed very low indeed, all the time saying: "Ohayo" (Good morning!) to my teacher. Thus my training began.

My first lesson was in reading and learning the syllabary. I was required not to learn twenty-six letters, but three thousand characters. Our language has really ten thousand characters in general use, and we are required to learn at least three thousand in the elementary school; that is, during the first six or eight years of school life.



JAPANESE CHARACTERS

Our characters are really little pictures. We draw a picture to represent our thought.

While reading and writing is very hard to learn, we think Japanese is beautiful when well written, and we all aim to write well.

Our reading lessons are often dull, much of our reading is about how we should behave. There seem to be rules

for everything. However, we do enjoy some little stories like your Mother Goose rhymes. We had a funny little rhyme about a cow, and one of our stories is much like your Red Riding Hood. Would you like to hear it?

"Once upon a time a little girl about seven years old was carrying rice-balls to her father, who had gone to sell toys at a festival several miles away. She ran carelessly along and, missing her path, soon found herself in front of a large bear. She could not run, so she decided to be friendly. The bear growled and growled. She thought of her rice-balls. Taking one in her hand and holding it toward the bear, she said: 'Ojisan, ojisan (uncle, uncle) is this what you want?' The bear took the ball and broke it open, but hesitated to eat it and growled again. Then the little girl said: 'Ojisan, I would not fool you; there is no poison in it.' So the bear ate up the rice-balls. The little girl then said: 'Ojisan, I'll be going.' In her haste she would have taken the wrong road, but the now friendly bear, to repay her kindness, pointed her to the road that led her safely home."

I guess this story was meant to teach us that kindness pays.

Our other lessons were in writing, geography, drawing and counting. I believe we all liked our lessons in counting

the best. To me it seemed like play to push the little balls on our soroban up and down. This counting was a great rest after the long tedious lessons in reading and writing. Much time is spent in training us in morals and manners; we learned what we must do on all occasions. We must always smile no matter how we feel, and we can never be rude, we must always be polite. Our greatest lesson is a lesson of obedience; first to our Emperor, then to our ancestors, then to our parents and teachers. We learn how to bow properly; also that we must bow much lower to a man than to a woman; that our heads must touch the ground in bowing to royalty. Don't you think our custom of placing our hands in a heart shape and bowing our heads over them is very pretty and suggestive? We seem to be saying: "We give you our hearts as well as our hands in greeting." We are taught to arrange flowers artistically.

Patriotism is taught in our schools, not by a salute to the flag, but rather by paying respect to the picture of the Emperor. Every school has a picture of the Emperor; it is kept in a separate room and is the special care of the janitor. Under no circumstance must he permit others to touch it. In case of danger he must care for this picture first. On the Emperor's Birthday it is uncovered and brought into our

room, and every child stands with bowed head during the whole exercise. Not a head must be lifted until the picture is safely returned to its own room. One day a fire occurred in one of our schools and the janitor failed to save the Emperor's picture, so he killed himself. He knew, although he had not been at fault, the people would point to him with shame as one who failed to save his Emperor's picture. His friends all felt it was best he killed himself; they thought that would prove he was brave and had done his best to fulfill his duty.

Before I had finished my course in the elementary school we heard rumors of a new kind of school. It seemed to be a new force in our city.

Mr. Oshikawa and a Mr. Yoshida, not my father, had gathered together a little band of followers and they were teaching a new religion.

The people said they were always together, praying for a leader to help them teach this new religion. Besides this little band there were Rev. E. H. Jones and wife, of the Baptist Church, and Dr. and Mrs. H. W. Schwartz, of the Methodist Church, spending much time telling of a Saviour, who loved us and died for us all, and that He would give eternal life to all who believed on Him. At last the day

came when Mr. Oshikawa and his band were made happy by having their prayer answered. Rev. W. E. Hoy, of the Reformed Church of the United States, came as their leader. He was not in our city long until he planned to open schools for both boys and girls, and decided to invite all who could not pay to come learn to read and write, hoping in this way to get acquainted and be able to give them the message of God's love.

The little school grew rapidly because at that time every one was so anxious to learn English and anything American appealed to them.

Today this is changed, and we are using better judgment and we are only trying to learn the things that are suited to our needs. We are trying to find which of these new ideas are really worth while and use only them. Mr. Hoy decided to send for helpers and open a school for girls. I wanted to go to the new school, but my parents were not willing to have me attend. I can remember how excited I was the day O Mura San and O Yuki San, two of my little friends, told me that two lady teachers would arrive in Sendai that day.

Since then I learned the two lady teachers, Misses Ault and Poorbaugh, were just as excited as I was. Miss Ault

often told of the journey from Yokohama to Shiogama by boat, arriving about seven in the evening.

Mr. Hoy and Dr. and Mrs. Schwartz met them and took them to a Japanese hotel. Everything seemed so queer to them. They were asked to remove their shoes before entering and it seemed strange to be handed cushions, instead of chairs, to sit on.

Their attempts to sit and rise gracefully were laughable. Miss Ault never forgets her first supper. Small trays were placed before them on the floor, and to her it seemed like playing in a doll house. The girls who served were so pretty, neat and clean, and the tray looked so dainty, she was glad to eat. But oh! how awkward she was in using the chopsticks for the first time. She felt so embarrassed to find most of her soup spilled in her lap.

The journey to Sendai was made in a jinrikisha, and Miss Ault told us she had the queerest sensation when she got in it. She felt as though she had crawled into a baby carriage and had a man pulling her along. The ride was rough and novel and really enjoyable, because it was short.

As they neared the city of Sendai they were met by the little praying band who welcomed them with much joy. I wanted to go to see the strange women because O Mura San

JINRIKISHA

and O Yuki San were going, but my parents objected. My parents did not belong to the praying band like O Mura San's mother.

The little party came back to Sendai about midnight and early the next morning I went with my little friends to catch a glimpse of the strange women.

They were very different from each other, one was tall and the other short, like us. In fact I thought Miss Ault, short and with dark eyes (they were straight, not slanting, like our eyes), would look most like us, if she would wear a pretty kimono, instead of a tight-fitting waist and so much draping in her skirt. Her dress seemed so funny; instead of nice and tight, so she could take little steps, her skirt was so full and her sleeves were tight and no pockets in them at all. Our sleeves are loose and comfortable and the pockets in them are so handy for carrying packages, fan, and the food we cannot eat while at the table.

All the little girls liked to see the new hats from America. We never wear hats, we just oil our hair and brush it until it is glossy and doing it high on our heads, like mother does, we ornament our heads with lots of fancy pins and little fans. We use our oiled paper parasols for either rain or sun, but at present we have many umbrellas that are made

of cloth or silk. In our country the only hats are worn by the men. The farmer's rain hat is really curious, it looks like a small strawstack mounted on his head and sheds the rain much as a thatched roof on a house.

These new teachers soon found a suitable house on a street called Nibancho (or the second street). The house was used for a school, too, and O Mura San and O Yuki San were the first students; but securing students was easy then, for it cost nothing and the girls were glad to come. Soon 90 girls were enrolled. The school was so near my home and I, too, wanted to go and learn all the queer American ways. I talked so much about it that my father promised to go to the street meeting and learn from Mr. Hoy just what they were teaching. So on the holiday (Sunday), father went and heard about the "Jesus way." When he returned he said I could go and learn English, but he thought the "Way of the Gods" was good enough for us, and I should not learn this new religion. Later he gave me permission to enter the school.

On Sunday all our schools are closed, but this new school was held that day, too. The girls said it was different and they had no lessons to learn, just singing a new song and some talking and every girl received a card with a pretty

picture. The school had a baby organ and Miss Poorbaugh could play with both hands. This was wonderful to me, because our Japanese teachers only pick out the tune with one finger.

I was happy in the new school and the teachers were always kind and pleasant. Our school grew and soon Miss Poorbaugh's sister, Miss Emma, came to help in our work. The teaching of music was given to her and we all enjoyed this part of our work. We were taught Christmas songs—Christmas was to be a new holiday for us. On Christmas morning we came early and sang our carols at the homes of all the Christians in our city.

CLASS ROOM

Today our Girls' School, the Miyagi Jo Gakko, has grown to be second to none in our province, even the Imperial Government has recognized it as one of the leading schools. Thus it has grown

from such a small beginning and today, with its many graduates at work throughout the country, and its five American teachers, it is a great influence for good in the Miyagi Province.

CHAPTER V

AT WORSHIP

At the Miyagi Jo Gakko (Girls' School) I could not help being impressed with the "Jesus religion," as we all called it. Watching O Mura San and others, I felt that they had something that I lacked.

I attended the school on Sunday and learned to sing with others, "Waga Shu Yesu"; in your language, it would be "Yes, Jesus Loves Me."

Wa ga shu Yesu
Wa ga shu Yesu
Wa ga shu Yesu
Ware wo aisu.

I, too, was beginning to feel the love of this Jesus; but I still went through the forms of my old religions. I was both a Shintoist and a Buddhist.

There are three so-called religions in Japan. The Shinto, meaning "The Way of the Gods," is the national

religion and a form of patriotism. We believe our Mikado is a descendant of the gods, so we worship and do honor to him. We add to the Emperor all our great warriors and our ancestors and worship them; we also add all the great forces of nature that we fail to understand and many animals, hence strangers find us worshipping many gods, with our whole Island dotted with shrines and temples.

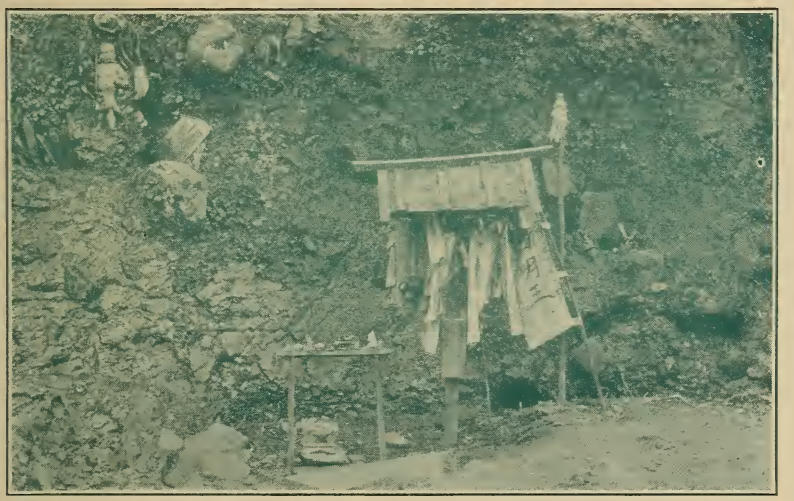
TORII

Shinto has no wonderful temples, the worshipper approaches through a simple "Torii" (sacred arch); this arch is made of two posts and two cross beams, the upper one projecting at both ends.

One of our old tales tells us these beams in olden times were perches for the birds, used in worship, at the sacred temple. Another tale tells us the "Golden Crow," a sacred bird, rests on these arches in his flight toward the sun.

No one really knows just why we have these arches, but today we use them as a place on which to hang our offerings of silk or paper. Many a wayside shrine is gaily decorated in all the colors of the rainbow.

We have no elaborate services. We worship any time during the day, ringing a bell and clapping our hands to call the god's attention; we drop our coin in the box, say our prayer and our worship is over. Shrines abound everywhere. Christians go to but one church, while we have shrines for different things, so we visit and pray at many places. We



FUDO, THE HEALER SHRINE

have this shrine to "Fudo the Healer" at Shiogama, where many go when ill. Once a year we go to the children's shrine and offer prayers for health, and that we may be good scholars.

The hot water shrine is a shrine just for women. In Sendai we have a shrine for men; it was erected to "Hachiman," the god of war. Crowds gather here on January 14, and bring offerings of "sake," rice liquor. Their worship consists of undressing and pouring cold water over their heads and bodies to cleanse themselves of the sins of the past year; and in praying to "Hachiman" for protection during the new year. In olden times they paraded the streets, but this is now forbidden. The men drink the "sake" the gods cannot drink, and return to their homes quarrelsome and intoxicated.

The roads through the country are full of nature shrines; you will see the shrine to the "Mountain God," the "Fox God," the "Monkey God," the "Tree God," and travelers drop in their coins and pray at all of these. Even our horses are not forgotten; there is a shrine for horses. Once a year horses are taken to the shrine, the coin is dropped, and clapping our hands to call the god's attention, the horses are made to say their prayers by running round

and round the shrine. The horses do not know what it all means, but they, and the children round about, enjoy it; while the owners believe these prayers will keep their horses in health for a year. Dr. Noss calls it a sort of life insurance.

This, then, is Shinto as we see it. Summing it all up, we may say it only pertains to this life. We learn to obey the laws of the state and family, and then follow our own desires.

Buddhism, however, is very different. It tells us all about a future life.

PAGODA

Buddhist priests teach we are born into this world many times, sometimes as a human being, or an animal, or a bird, or even an insect; therefore they never kill anything. They teach that it all depends on how you live, and how many prayers you say, whether you will be born next time to a pleasant life or a life of suffering.

Buddhism has thousands of temples and about as many idols as Shinto has shrines.

The temples are often placed in beautiful gardens full of little ponds containing gold fish and ducks.

The children are expected to buy, of the priest, food for these sacred animals. While the parents worship before the idol in the temple, the children roam in the gardens, feeding the gold fish or doves, that are supposed to be messengers of the gods.

The boys enjoy feeding the turtles and deer, and like the capers of the frisky little ponies. The children's god is called "Jizo"; he is represented as sitting with a pile of stones in his lap. It is believed that when little children die they must wander around, ever piling up stones in Jizo's lap for prayers. Wicked demons scare the children and throw down their stones, and then they must begin to pile the stones over again.

Children are taken to the temple to be christened, and also in cases of sickness. Some idols are thought to have special power in healing the sick. It is the custom to rub the afflicted part of the body on the same part of the idol, hence many idols are minus hands or legs or ears, or have their whole face caved in because so many had tooth-ache or ear-ache, etc. A coin must always be given the priest before you can go near the idol.

The Japanese seem to do as St. Paul commands, "Pray without ceasing"; everywhere there is a call to prayer.

They have invented many curious ways of praying, for instance, we may write our prayer on a slip of paper, chew it into a little ball and throw the ball at the idol. If it sticks our prayer will be answered; if not, we must pray again. Or we can use the prayer-wheel. This is built much like your coffee grinder; we place our written prayer in the hopper and start to grind. The more times the wheel goes round the more prayers we get credit for saying.

I used to use this prayer-wheel, but since I came to the Christian school I am sorry to find my people praying always, but not knowing the God who alone is able to answer their prayers. They pray to gods that Isaiah told about: "that have eyes that see not, and ears that hear not"; gods that can never respond to their cry of need. Let us pray earnestly that soon all may learn of the one true God to whom all men shall bow, who alone can give healing divine and life eternal.

Confucianism, the other great religion, is a set of rules to live by. Many of the rules are very good, but most of the good ones apply only to men and boys.

Confucius had no place for girls and women, and in his great books likens them often to pigs and other animals, but

Y. W. C. A. SUMMER CONFERENCE

a better day is dawning in Japan for women.

Shortly before I graduated from the Girls' School I was urged to join the Young Women's Christian Association of the School. It is composed of all the Christian girls, and I said: "Oh! why do you ask me to join? Am I a Christian?" Although I had never told anyone, I really was trying to be a Christian. The girls said: "You can keep it a secret no longer. We can tell by your life you are of the Jesus Religion." So I openly confessed Jesus, joining both the church and the Association. One day, in a meeting, our leader told us the great need for Bible-women—women who could go in the neglected homes and carry the message of light. She reminded us that only women could enter our Japanese houses, that our men were giving their time as teachers and evangelists, and doing much good, but the call for consecrated women was great.

I felt something tugging at my heart, and urging me to say, "Oh! send me, I'll go," but then I remembered my mother and father, and how disappointed they would be to even know I had decided to follow the "Jesus Way."

I knew they expected me to marry a young man already selected, and he was not a Christian, so I held my peace and permitted the chance to pass; but oh! I did want to respond to that call. Time passed and at length the day of graduation came.

We had a week of celebration, as you do in America. My parents were so proud of me. I told them I was a Christian, and they laughed and said I'd soon forget that, when I left school and was home with them planning for my wedding.

The graduation day was over at last, and I was about to leave. As I said good-bye, one of our teachers put her arms about me and said: "O Fuji San, I did wish you might continue your studies in our Bible department and become a much-needed Bible-woman."

Life at home was not as pleasant as at school. I missed the teachers and the girls, too. My parents refused to take my changed religious beliefs seriously. It was hard to be a Christian, and finally my parents treated me harshly. I tried

BIBLE-WOMAN

to bear it all as Jesus would have me do. The young man selected for me to marry did not want to marry a Christian, so my parents felt disgraced, and I determined to go to my teachers and tell them my distress.

They received me gladly, and offered to have me come back to them and take up the Bible-study, with a view of becoming a Bible-woman; and this time when my heart urged me to say: "Yes," I was at liberty to go.

Two years of training followed. During that time I taught in Sunday School and made some visits; at last I was graduated, and as a Bible-woman was given the privilege of teaching this message to women, as well as children.

CHAPTER VI

MY WORK AS A BIBLE-WOMAN

My first work was in the Miyagi district, round about Sendai. Going from house to house and talking about the Bible was very different from teaching in Sunday School. I went first to the parents of our scholars and was received very well, after that I planned to call on a few strangers each day.

My duties were varied. On Sunday, besides teaching, I played the organ and led the singing. Then I gave every one a word of welcome, taking special care to see that I secured names and addresses of any strangers present, so I could call on them during the week. During the week I called on all our absent Sunday School scholars, held a mother's meeting, attended the Ladies' Aid meeting and planned for any social times.

We do not have many social times in our churches in Japan. Our men and women are not in the habit of mingling together in public, so only occasionally we gather together and have an informal program. Our meetings are

opened with prayer and singing, some children sing or recite or go through some exercises, and refreshments are served.

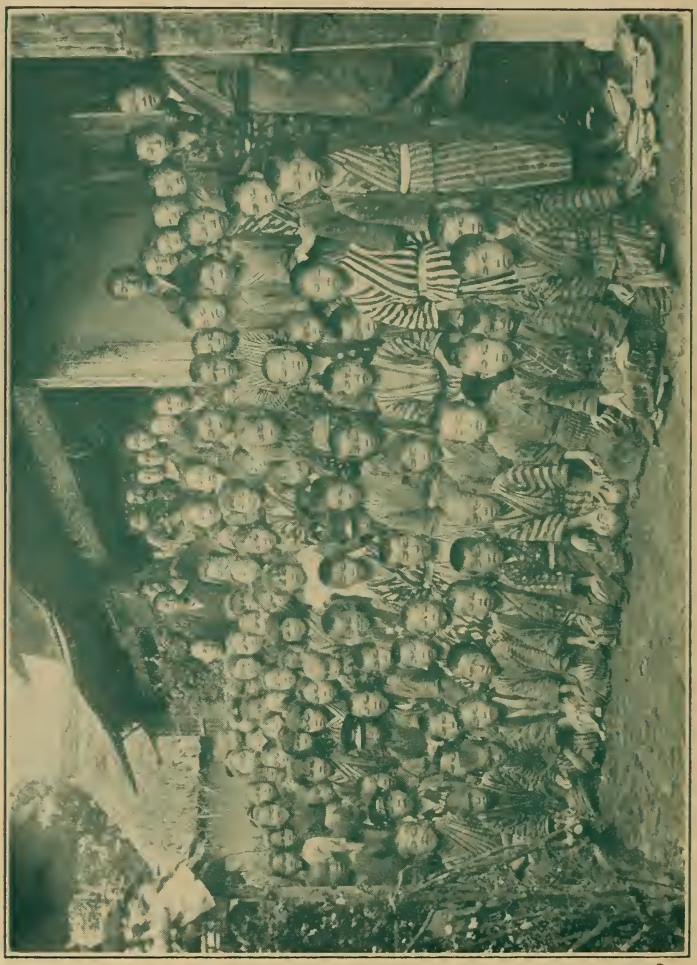
In the homes, the Bible-women try to render any needed service, like your deaconesses will render in America. In case of illness, the Bible-woman will perform, in part, the duties of nurse, thus gaining the love and confidence of the parents. At first the people did not seem very anxious to have me call, but by repeated visits and little acts of kindness, the wall of opposition was broken down, and they frequently asked me: "Why do you do all these things instead of thinking about your own pleasure?" Then we can tell them of Jesus and what He has done for us, and how our love to Him compels us to do deeds of kindness to others. We can tell them how Jesus and His love changed our lives, and made us happy, and how much we want them to learn the "Jesus Way." Sometimes it is hard to get permission to read the Bible, but they all love to hear us sing. So I sing the gospel first, and then tell them the message of my song, and finally I am permitted to read this same message from my Bible.

I ask them to think it over until I call again, and on the next call you may be sure they have talked it over at home, and with their neighbors, and are ready with lots of questions.

Thus we sow the seed and God is not slow in giving us the increase. If my home visits are well received, I urge them to attend preaching services.

Our services are held in our chapels and in preaching stations. Our chapels are like your own, but our preaching stations are vacant storerooms, in different towns and villages to which the evangelist goes with a organ, picture rolls and tracts. The meetings are announced in advance, and special invitations sent to some leading men. The meeting is opened with singing and cornet playing, which helps to attract attention. The crowd gathers and they are invited into the room to discuss some phase of the new religion. Many enter, but gradually those not interested drift away, and the truth seekers remain, often coming again and again. They are then directed to our nearest church and Sunday School.

Did you ever go to a Sunday School out of doors? One time my Sunday School met under a big tree. We had noticed a village not far away that needed Christian teaching and I was sent out to gather the children together. With two student friends, I went forth; it was my first attempt and oh! my heart did thump. I wondered if I would be able to say the right thing!



SUNDAY SCHOOL

My companions, O Haru San (Miss Spring) and O Hana San (Miss Flower) were nervous, too. I carried my Bible; O Hana San carried a long picture roll, like you use in your primary department, in fact, it might have been the very one from your church, for some mission band sent it to the school. When you learn how we use them, I know every band and Sunday School will want to send us their old rolls. O Haru San carried the hymn-book, she had several little songs caged up in her throat, but she wondered if she would be able to let them out at the right time. On we walked until we saw a group of children, under a big tree, and we decided there was our Sunday School.

I called to them and said O Haru San would sing to them; some waited, some laughed and some said, "Oh! don't go, maybe it is some of the Jesus people, and grandmother said I must never listen to them." But curiosity was stronger than grandmother's teaching, and as the singing continued, the children came nearer and nearer. I told them I would read a little story from my book and it was a true story, too. I read the story of "Jesus blessing little children," and O Hana San opened the bright roll and there was the picture of the very story I had read, that wonderful picture of Jesus with the child on His knees, and all the mothers pressing near Him for a blessing for their babies.

The children were delighted and asked many questions. I told them my book was full of such stories and if they would come next Sunday to the tree I'd tell another story and show more pictures. They all promised to come and the following Sunday quite a crowd were awaiting us. This day our story was about the "Lost Sheep," and our picture "Christ, the Good Shepherd." How they did listen and how glad they were when I told them the Good Shepherd never rested until he found the lost sheep. Our little school thus started, continued until one rainy Sunday made it impossible for the children to come.

We trudged on to our tree and found only a few of our little Sunday School, but we found a mother of one of the girls present, and she said she came to tell us she thought all the things we told the children were good, and as we could not teach out under the tree much longer, we could come into her home. Oh, how glad we were to accept her kind invitation.

It was just what we had been praying for. Our school grew during that winter, and early in the spring we rented a large empty room. We now had a preaching service and the older people came and wanted a church. So they began selling eggs and giving their money for the building fund.

I think our friends in the United States will help them, and soon we will have a chapel large enough to seat all who want to come.

Another Bible-woman, O Hisa San, told me she gets up at half-past three every Sunday to get to her Sunday School. She crosses a river in a steamboat and leaving the steamboat, crosses another river in a sail-boat, and teaches her Sunday School, of nearly two hundred children alone. In winter, when the river is frozen, she has to cross the ice. Her prayer is for a helper in her work. These Bible-women have so many claims on their time.

One day one of our Bible-women had a woman come to her dragging a little child; of course she took her to the Missionary. The child was an ugly little girl, covered with sores and bruises.

The mother said the sores were from having her pierced to let out the evil spirits. She gave the girl to the Missionary, saying: "I hate her and can do nothing for her, so I give her to you." The Missionary, after a few questions, learned she really belonged to this woman, but the woman had another beautiful girl and did not want her; in fact she never had wanted her, she wanted a son. Our Missionary took the little girl and surely she did seem to have an evil spirit.

She would never answer us a word and would hardly permit us to touch her, but we tried to bathe the poor body and heal the bruises made by the cruel piercing needle. For several days there seemed to be no response, but finally love won the battle, and our little girl wanted to know what made us treat her so kindly when she had been so ugly.

We told her we loved her, and felt so sorry for her, but, poor thing, she had never known love and could hardly understand us, but the day came when she, too, wanted to learn about that love. She tried hard to please her teachers and new friends.

She became an earnest Christian and was the means of bringing her own mother and father to Christ by her changed life.

Her family were reunited and lived happily together as Christians.

This is a mere glimpse into my life as a Bible-woman. It is a hard but joyous life. Ofttimes we are lonely, as the Japanese do not look with kindness on young women who travel alone and do not get married early, so a large number would not permit their daughters to associate with us. We must learn to bear this with such gentleness and tact that we may win even our enemies to the "Jesus Way."

I had been working in the Miyagi district for several years when the call came from the Yamagata district for trained workers.

The harvest there was ripe, but the reapers few. Some missionaries like John the Baptist of old had been forerunners of this gospel, but little harvesting had been done.

I was asked to assist the Missionary at Yamagata. Several preaching stations had been opened, and some Japanese preachers were at work, but the need for work among the children was great. With mingled joy and regret I responded to the call. I was proud to be trusted with work in this new field, but I had learned to love the women on whom I called, and I loved our Sunday School and church at Sendai.

My trip to Yamagata by rail was my first ride on a train. I had never been so far from home, so it was really an event to me. The 104 miles were covered in eight hours, and I was safely housed with our Missionary.

During the next few days he told me of his travels through this district, of the response the people gave and of how few laborers were available to care for this particular field. I, then and there, consecrated myself anew to the work in this district.

PLAYING WITH HER DOLL

The Missionary told me that on his last tour, with the help of a Japanese preacher, they had addressed ten thousand people and distributed over fifteen thousand tracts, and as a result two hundred persons were seeking to know more of this "Jesus Way."

The children in our neighborhood soon learned to know me and we had good times together.

The little church grew and the Sunday School was my delight.

Two little girls from the home of a high official came to the school. I noticed they showed interest and learned rapidly. One day one of them whispered, "Do you know I am a Christian, too? I say 'Now I lay me down to sleep' every night, and I never drink even when my father wants me to."

Dear little girl! She *was* a Christian, for she had

learned to trust herself to the care of Jesus. Another little girl, when asked what she wanted to be when she grew up, responded: "An American principal of a Jesus orphanage." Of course she could never be that, could she?

But she had been watching the Missionary closely, and she wanted to be just like her and be able to do the same helpful things. One of the boys said: "You teachers have taught us to love one another, while before we were selfish, and did not care how others got along."

The winters in Yamagata were hard ones. The heavy snows made travel very hard; yet this is our very best time for visiting, especially in the country. As the snow keeps the people indoors they welcome a caller. The Missionary and his helper often go through snow up to their waists; sometimes they lose the path and spend much valuable time finding the way out.

Would you like to know how our Sunday School looks while in session? A number of girls and boys crowd in. The girls carry babies on their backs and frequently need to jump up and down or sway from side to side to amuse the crying babies. The boys like to bring balls and amuse themselves by keeping two or three in the air at one time while we are talking, and in a new village some of the chil-

dren on the outside annoy us by yelling in the doors or stoning the outside of the building. This only happens when our schools are first opened and are new to them.

It is hard to talk under these conditions, so we have lots of singing. Everyone loves to sing, and they all sing as loudly and quickly as they can.

One time one of your ministers was here on a visit, and he was asked to play the organ for Sunday school. He started your song, "Bringing In the Sheaves," but soon the children were far ahead of him, singing four verses without stopping. He had all he could do to keep up to them. At the close the Missionary said: "Say! did you lead the music?" The visitor replied: "Oh, dear, no! I was only too glad to be able to follow." These little things would be funny to you, but when we see Sunday after Sunday the same children come again and again, and each time listen more intently to the stories, and learn to love the little songs and the pictures, we know it can only lead to one end—the desire to learn to do the things that are well pleasing unto God.

CHAPTER VII

MY MARRIAGE

It was in the midst of my work that the most important event of my whole life occurred—I met the man who later became my husband. I know you Juniors want to hear all about it, and it *was* just a bit romantic. One day I had gone to a neighboring village to visit the silk factories and speak to the girls. Much of our work is done among these girls. They work from five in the morning until ten at night, seven days in the week, with less than two hours daily for meals, so our visiting is done at the factory. Nearing the factory I heard someone blowing a horn, and coming to the end of the street I saw a motorcycle with a side car. Of course it could mean only one thing—a Missionary and his helper. The Missionary was blowing the horn and his helper giving out tracts until the crowd gathered. When the helper handed me a tract I showed him the tracts I had been giving the girls in the factory, and soon we were acquainted. The Missionary talked and explained a picture roll after lots of singing. The meeting being over, we were all invited to an

evening meeting to be held in an empty storeroom.

I attended the evening meeting and was delighted to find the Japanese helper had been trained in North Japan College at Sendai. Can you imagine how we enjoyed talking about Sendai and our dear old schooldays? Ichiro San (for that was his name) told me of his struggle to be a Christian; how his people cast him out when he joined the church, and not knowing where to go he applied at the Industrial Home of the Reformed Church in Sendai. Here he was given a chance to learn printing, and by working at his trade half-time and going to school the rest of the time he had acquired an education. Before graduating from college he had made up his mind to preach the gospel. Financial aid was sent him by one of the churches in the United States, so he was able to take the theological course. He told me he had just lately come to this district.

The evening service passed all too quickly for me, and after it closed I met Ichiro San again.

Ichiro San and I soon became the best of friends, as we planned our work together and taught in the same Sunday Schools. The time passed pleasantly, and soon Ichiro was assigned to a church in a village some distance away.

I knew I would miss him greatly, and somehow I felt

he would miss me, too. At last the night came to say "Good-bye," and then I learned he had never meant to say a real good-bye. He told me he always meant to have me go to the new church with him as his wife. I felt I was not good enough to be a preacher's wife, but I knew I had learned to love him dearly and would try, oh! so earnestly, to help him in the work we both loved.

Our parents kindly made the necessary arrangements, according to our custom, and Ichiro left me with the understanding he would return soon to marry me. My first greeting from Ichiro after his departure was the gift of a dress, and it made me so happy.

I suppose you think that was a queer present coming from my fiance, don't you? Well, to me it was a most welcome one, for in our country it is quite the customary engagement gift. Every man sends a dress or at least an "obi" (sash) as soon as the engagement is announced, and we look forward to it as you look forward to a ring. In return I sent him some violets, my favorite flowers, with a sprig of evergreen, and he knew it meant my love for him would be unchanging.

We were married in the home of the Missionary at Yamagata. It was a quiet little wedding, so different from

many of our weddings in Japan. I could not help feeling glad I was a Christian, and thus permitted to choose my own husband. Think of it! Many of my friends, during their school years, are called home suddenly to marry one whom they have never seen.

Every father feels it his duty to select a husband for his daughter when she is of suitable age. A friend acts as go-between and tries to bring the father a suitable man, and if the father accepts him the affair is settled, after the go-between receives a gift for the service rendered.

The girl has nothing to do but smile and submit, and sometimes it turns out very pleasantly, but just as often it means unhappiness for the girl. Especially is this true when a Christian girl is forced to marry a man of another religion, for the man is always head of the family and must be obeyed.

Our new home was about 100 miles from Yamagata, in the Wakamatsu district, a new district giving much spiritual promise. With great joy we took up our new work and Ichiro made regular trips into the surrounding country, because most of our members were of the farming class. The snows, like in the Yamagata district, made our winter work very hard. In many places it is from six to ten feet deep

and it does not melt for many months. In the spring we organized a Ladies' Aid Society, and these poor women would bring a few eggs or a chicken and I would sell them and add to our little building fund, for by faith we could see the time was not far distant when our little room could not hold all who would come. During the spring our hopes were realized, and some of our Sunday School classes were held in the open air during the summer. When autumn came we called a meeting to see what could be done. It was on prayer-meeting night, and our attendance was unusually small. Only seven were present, and these felt very much depressed. Only one month before we had agreed to buy at a bargain a lot of ground in the center of town, an ideal location. There were two old houses on the lot, and we had planned to roll them together and remodel them for a Sunday School, but as is always the case in such an enterprise, the cost was going beyond our first estimate.

We were especially discouraged to hear that one hundred and fifty feet of foundation stone, costing twenty dollars in American money, would be needed. To you and your church this would not seem a large sum, but to the seven gathered for prayer it seemed impossible.

The stone-mason had explained the extra charge was due

to the fact that the quarry where our building stone would be secured had a very large block of stone high up, which would need to be removed before it was safe to take out any more stone. In our need we prayed very earnestly, and while we prayed the place was shaken by a single, violent earthquake jar. The next morning our stone-mason came with a new estimate. It would cost only half as much, because the earthquake jar had thrown down the great block and split it into the right-sized pieces to be used for their purposes. Some people called this "luck," but we called it a "miracle" in answer to our prayer.

The story of the miracle was told far and near, and many came to see this little church when it was finished. It was a joyous day when the Missionary from Wakamatsu came to dedicate our building to the service of Jesus.

Soon after the dedication our province had a fair, and the Christians decided to put up a rest booth. While the people rested we held services which met with great success. An evangelist was secured and the services continued even when the fair closed. All the Christian churches received converts, and we received our share, too.

A year had passed and Ichiro and I decided to spend our first wedding anniversary in Yamagata. The day, a

bright clear one, just the kind you would select for a holiday, arrived and we started joyously on our trip. We recalled our first trip and many incidents of our meetings in Yamagata, as well as the trips to the villages through which we were passing. Arriving in Yamagata, we were warmly received by the Missionary and his wife, who wanted to hear all about our work. In turn they told us of their own work, and especially of the very new kindergarten, and promised I should see it the next day.

I wish I could picture to you that kindergarten, so you would enjoy it as much as I did. Think of a large plain room with lots of wooden shoes in a box at the door. Then, as you open the door, imagine about twenty-five or thirty little tots with glossy black hair and shining black eyes all togged out in gay little kimonos, all squatting on the floor, forming a group around the teacher, as she told them the story of the "White Hare of Inaba." You know the story, don't you? How the hare used the boasting crocodiles as a bridge, so she could leave her island home, and how she was punished for her trick? If you never heard the story, read all about it in Ozaki's "Japanese Fairy Tales."

We watched the children make a picture of some chrysanthemums. The Missionary's wife taught them a little

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song about how the mill wheel goes around and grinds the wheat and gives us nice flour for bread. Then they all played band, each child representing a musical instrument, and it was lots of fun as well as exercise to keep time to the music.

After a march around the room they all took their places in the circle, and were permitted to choose their games.

One wanted to play "Little Seeds." It was interesting to see the little seeds all asleep in the ground until two children, chosen to represent sun and rain, touched the seeds into life. Slowly the little seeds lifted their heads and grew into lovely flowers. Children representing bees sipped the sweet honey from the blossoms, flying around with a sweet buzzing sound. Thus the story of the whole plant life was told.

The little faces were full of joy and gladness, and, oh! I did wish we could have a kindergarten in connection with each of our preaching stations.

No work reaches the heart of a parent so quickly as an interest in their little children.

Our holiday was over and on our return trip I told Ichiro how much I wished our church could have a kindergarten. My husband told me the Reformed Church main-

tained four kindergartens in Japan, and that all the Juniors in the churches in the United States were raising money for more kindergartens. So I am encouraged to think that soon we, too, will have one for our children.

This little story of my life is almost finished. I have only one more experience to tell you about. I want to tell you about the day my dear little daughter was first laid in my arms. Footsteps came to our door, just as in the other days they came to my father's door, when I was a baby, and they asked in the same tones: "Is it a boy?" But at our answer, "No, it is a girl!" no one expressed sorrow or regret. Many of the friends were Christians, and everyone knew that we would be just as proud of our baby girl as we could have been of a boy. Thirty-three days had passed and instead of presenting our daughter to the gods in the temple, we wended our way to our little church and in the simple rite of baptism we presented our baby daughter to the God and Father of us all. O Haru San (Miss Spring), as we call our baby, is growing larger and stronger, and when we look at her we long more and more for a kindergarten.

I have told this little story that the Juniors may know the work the Reformed Church is doing in far-away Japan.

NEW BABY

You take us as children in the kindergarten and lead us every step of our Christian life, and when I think of how much my husband and I owe to you and your churches I am only sorry we cannot do even more in giving the same privileges to others.

There are never enough buildings and missionaries. One of your missionaries said: "We could secure one million children for the Christian Sunday Schools in one month, had we the rooms and teachers to care for them."

Accept our gratitude for what you have already done, and think of our great needs, and continue to help us to carry this gospel of light to those who yet sit in darkness.

GLOSSARY

Áni san (ah-nee san), elder brother.
Búddhism (boodhism), religion of Buddha, who taught in India 2400 years ago.
Confúcianism, doctrine of Kongfutse, who taught in China 2400 years ago.
Fudó (foo-doh), a god who is worshipped as a healer.
Fúji (foo-jee), name of a beautiful mountain.
Fóji san, Fúji-no-yáma, Mount Fuji.
Gém-pei (gem-pay), a boy's game.
Háchiman (hah-chee-man), god of war.
Hána (hah-nah), flower.
Háru (hah-roo), spring.
Hiróse (hee-roh-say), broad shallows; name of a river.
Hisá (hee-sah), old, ancient.
Izanági (ee-zah-nah-ghee), a god who created Japan.
Izanámi (ee-zah-nah-mee), sister and wife of Izanagi.
Ichiro (ee-chee-roh), first boy; name of a boy.
Inába (ee-nah-bah), rice ground; name of a place.
Jínrikisha, man-power wheel; a carriage pulled by a man.
Jizó (jee-zoh), a god who helps children after death.
Jogakko, a girls' school.
Kamidana (kah-mee-dah-nah), a god shelf; a place in the house where idols are kept.
Kiri (kee-ree), a tree, or its wood; the paulownia.
Kyúshu (kee-oo-shoo), nine countries; name of a large southern island in Japan.
Mátsushima (mah-tsoo-shee-mah), pine islands; a beautiful island near Sendai.
Mikádo (mee-kah-doh), august gate; palace; the Emperor.
Miyági (mee-yah-ghee), shrine castle; name of the plain in which Sendai stands.
Múra (moo-rah), a village; a country district.

Néi-san (nay-san), elder sister.
Nibáncho (nee-ban-cho), two number street; Second Street.
Níppon, the same as Nihon; sunrise; Japan.
Nobóri (noh-boh-ree), a banner; a long piece of cloth fastened to a pole.
O (oh), honorable.
O bá san (oh-bah-san), old lady; grandmother.
O háyo (like Ohio), honorable earliness; good morning.
Ó ji san (oh-jee-san), uncle.
O ká san (oh-kah-san), mother.
O tótsu san (oh-totts-san), father.
Óbi (oh-bee), sash; girdle.
Oshikáwa (oh-shee-kah-wah), push river; a family name.
Ozáki (oh-zah-kee), little slope; a family name.
Sákura (sah-koo-rah), cherry.
San, added to a name means Mr., Mrs. or Miss.
Séndai (sen-die), hermit's terrace; name of a city.
Shikóku (shee-koh-koo), four provinces; name of an island.
Shínto, god way; the native religion of Japan.
Shiogáma (shee-oh-gah-mah), salt cauldron; a port near Sendai.
Tánabáta (tah-nah-bah-tah), name of a summer festival.
Tóko (toh-koh), a bed; comforter laid on the floor.
Toríi (toh-ree), the portal to a shrine.
Wága Shu Yésu (wah-gah shoo yay-soo), my Lord Jesus.
Wákamátsu (wah-kah-mah-tsoo), young pines; name of a city.
Yámagata (yah-mah-gah-tah), mountain shape; name of a city.
Yézo (yay-zoh), barbarian, name of the northern island, Hokkaido.
Yokoháma (yoh-koh-hah-mah), transverse beach; name of the port near Tokyo.
Yóshida (yoh-shee-dah), good rice fields; a family name.
Yúki (you-kee), snow.

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